

Please amend the claims as follows:

1 1. (currently amended) Apparatus for providing information ~~in as a response to a query on a~~
2 ~~virtual database table, where the query and the response thereto have defined forms, the query~~
3 ~~being addressed to a database the virtual database table having appearing to have at least one~~
4 ~~row one or more rows, each row having at least one named field one or more fields, the query~~
5 ~~including at least one field name a field name of the named fields to specify the information to be~~
6 ~~provided in the response and an indication of a manner of selecting a row of the rows containing~~
7 ~~the information from the database table, and~~
8 the apparatus comprising:

9 a virtual database service; and

10 an information source for the information to be provided ~~which does not use the named~~
11 ~~field to identify the information to be provided,~~
12 the virtual database service receiving the query, ~~using responding to the field name and the~~
13 indication of the manner of selecting a row ~~as required~~ to obtain the information to be provided
14 from the information source, and providing the information ~~in as the value of the field indicated by~~
15 ~~the field name in the selected row the response,~~
16 whereby the apparatus presents a ~~the virtual database table of the form addressed by the query to a~~
17 source of the query .

1 2. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the indication of a manner of selecting a row includes a selection value; and
3 the information source provides a component of the information to be provided in response to a
4 match between the selection value and a pattern that matches a plurality of values and is
5 accessible to the information source.

1 3. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the query is an SQL query addressing the database table;
3 the field name is contained in a SELECT clause in the query; and
4 the indication of the manner of selecting a row is contained in a WHERE clause in the
5 query.

1 4. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the information source is an access evaluator which determines whether a user may have
3 access to an information resource;

4 the manner of selecting the row includes information from which the user and the
5 information resource may be determined; and

6 the provided information includes an indication of whether the user determined from the
7 information may access the information resource determined therefrom.

1 5. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 4 wherein:

2 the access evaluator determines whether the user may have access to the information
3 resource by considering one or more access policies, each access policy indicating whether a user
4 group may have access to a set of information resources and access by the user to the information
5 resource being allowed when the access policies for the user groups to which the user belongs and
6 the sets of information resources to which the information resource belongs so indicate; and

7 the manner of selecting the row contains membership information about the user from
8 which membership of the user in a user group may be determined.

1 6. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 5 wherein:

2 the access evaluator uses the membership information to determine membership of the user
3 in a user group.

1 7. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 6 wherein:

2 the access evaluator determines that there may be a user group such that membership in the
3 user group would give the user access to the information resource; and

4 the provided information indicates a method of providing further information about the
5 user in a further query from which the user's membership in the user group can be determined.

1 8. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 7 wherein:

2 the further information includes authentication information which may be used to validate
3 the user's identity.

- 1 9. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 8 further comprising:
 - 2 an additional information source that is an authenticator, the authenticator using the
 - 3 authentication information to validate the user's identity.
- 1 10. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 9 wherein:
 - 2 the response to the further query provides an indication whether the user's identity is
 - 3 valid.
- 1 11. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 5 further comprising:
 - 2 an additional information source that is a user profile information source which provides
 - 3 additional information about the user;
 - 4 the information about the user includes a user information retrieval method specification
 - 5 that specifies how the user profile information source provides the additional information; and
 - 6 the access evaluator uses at least some of the additional information to determine
 - 7 membership of the user in the user group.
- 1 12. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 5 further comprising:
 - 2 an additional information source that is an authenticator which validates the identity of the
 - 3 user;
 - 4 the authenticator uses the membership information to validate the identity of the user; and
 - 5 the access evaluator determines membership of the user in a user group only after the
 - 6 authenticator has validated the user's identity.
- 1 13. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 4 further comprising:
 - 2 an additional information source that is an authenticator which validates an identity of the
 - 3 user;
 - 4 the manner of selecting the row includes authentication information which the
 - 5 authenticator uses to validate the user's identity; and
 - 6 the provided information is obtained at least in part from the authenticator and includes an
 - 7 indication of whether the user's identity is valid.

- 1 14. (original) The apparatus set forth in claim 4 further comprising:
 - 2 an additional information source that is a user profile information source which provides
 - 3 additional information about the user;
 - 4 the manner of selecting the row includes profile information gathering information which
 - 5 indicates to the profile information source how to gather the profile information; and
 - 6 the provided information is obtained at least in part from the profile information source
 - 7 and includes the profile information.